

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

19 December 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

HOT TOPICS.....	2
Air Pollution Even Worse for Heart than Lungs.....	2
Athletic Youth at Higher Risk of Sudden Death.....	2
Bacterium Cleans Up Uranium, Generates Electricity.....	2
Beware the Snowblower.....	3
Cinnamon Helps Diabetes.....	3
Cod Liver Oil Reduces Diabetes Risk.....	3
Health Consequences of Gulf War Persist -Studies.....	3
Peacekeeping Duties May Harm Soldiers' Health.....	3
Scientists Discover Connection between Obesity and Diabetes.....	4
Urine Test May Find Early Kidney Cancer.....	4
FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY.....	4
Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis --- Selected States, 1998--2002.....	4
Influenza Update.....	5
USEUCOM.....	6
"Bug in Cakes" Poisons 300 Children.....	6
Kazakhstan: Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome.....	6
Legionellosis Progresses in Pas-de-Calais.....	6
South Africa: Horse Racing Influenza Outbreak.....	7
Polio Outbreak in Nigeria Raises Red Flag.....	7
USCENTCOM.....	7
About 150 Troops in Iraq Contract Sand Fly Disease.....	7
Tajik Migrant Workers Bring Back Money, Gifts and Often AIDS from Russia.....	7
USNORTHCOM.....	8
Army Facing Medical Crisis.....	8
CDC: Updated Guidelines for Laboratory Diagnosis of SARS-CoV Infection.....	8
FDA and CBP Announce Their Transitional Compliance Policy on Food Imports under the Bioterrorism Act.....	8
Group Puzzled by Rise in West Nile Cases.....	8
States Unprepared for Health Emergencies -Report.....	9
US Considers Nonprescription 'Morning-After Pill'.....	9
Whooping Cough at Wisconsin Preschool.....	9
Wyoming: Bovine Brucellosis.....	9
U.S. Health Agency Announces Grant to Fight Infectious Diseases, Bioterrorism on Mexico Border.....	9
USPACOM.....	10
Dengue Fever Update for PACOM Countries.....	10
Food Poisoning Affects 200 Workers in Vietnam.....	10

Hong Kong Department of Health Confirms Imported Cholera Case	10
S. Korea Sees Breakthrough in Mad Cow-Resistant Calves	11
Taiwan Medical Researcher Tests Positive for SARS.....	11
USSOUTHCOM	11
Brazil: Dengue Fever Update	11
Colombia: Outbreak of Undiagnosed Severe Respiratory Disease	11

HOT TOPICS

Air Pollution Even Worse for Heart than Lungs

16 November – Reuters reported long-term exposure to fine particles -- so-called particulate matter -- in polluted air is more likely to cause death from [cardiovascular disease](#) than from [respiratory conditions](#), researchers reported. In a study looking at pollution effects in U.S. metropolitan areas, 45.1 percent of deaths were attributable to cardiovascular disease, whereas only 8.2 percent were related to respiratory diseases. The new findings, published in the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation*, are based on an analysis of data on deaths classified according to specific cause, combined with air pollution data from 116 US cities. Data on 500,000 subjects were included in the analysis. During the 16-year study period, 22.5 percent of the subjects died, the researchers note. Further analysis confirmed a direct link between long-term particulate matter exposure and cause-specific mortality. For each unit rise in particulate matter, the risk of death from cardiovascular disease plus diabetes rose by 12 percent. Respiratory disease deaths were not consistently associated with particulate matter exposure, the authors note. Among people who had never smoked, such exposure was positively linked to mortality from pneumonia and influenza. Smoking was found to be a stronger risk factor than air pollution for deaths from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, the researchers found. However, as expected, the two factors often work together to produce a larger increase in risk. [View Article](#)

Athletic Youth at Higher Risk of Sudden Death

10 December – Reuters reported teens and young adults who regularly train and compete in sports are more than twice as likely to experience sudden death as non-athletes, according to a new study. The findings are based on death rates from more than 1 million young Italians, of whom 112,790 were competitive athletes. In most cases, sudden death among athletes was due to an underlying heart condition, such as coronary artery disease. As a result, the study authors write that engaging in sports likely triggers death from another cause, and does not, by itself, endanger athletes' lives. Researchers recommend that athletes continue to be screened for underlying heart conditions, and that experts work to devise new screening tools that can detect conditions that current techniques miss. [View Article](#)

Bacterium Cleans Up Uranium, Generates Electricity

12 December – Science Blog reported Department of Energy-funded researchers have decoded and analyzed the genome of a bacterium with the potential to bioremediate [radioactive metals](#) and generate electricity. In an article published in the December 12th issue of *Science*, researchers at The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, report that *Geobacter sulfurreducens* possesses extraordinary capabilities to transport electrons and "reduce" metal ions as part of its energy-generating metabolism. [View Article](#)

Beware the Snowblower

14 December – Health Day News reported snowblowers may be the easiest way to clear snow, but they can also be the most dangerous. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that in 2001, there were 4,387 hospital emergency room injuries associated with snow throwers or blowers. The injuries can range from severe cuts, crushed or broken bones, joint injuries, finger amputations (two-thirds of the injuries involve fingers), and even death. Nineteen deaths have been reported since 1992: two happened when the person was caught in the machine; and five were the result of carbon monoxide poisoning. [View Article](#)

Cinnamon Helps Diabetes

11 December – Reuters reported people with [diabetes](#) can help keep their bodies healthy by simply adding a dash of spice to their diet, new research reports. In a study, diabetics who incorporated one gram -- equivalent to less than one-quarter teaspoon -- of cinnamon per day for 40 days into their normal diets experienced a decrease in levels of blood sugar, cholesterol and blood fats. During the study, researchers asked 60 people with type 2 diabetes to consume 1, 3, or 6 grams of cinnamon each day for 40 days, or the equivalent amount of wheat flour, as a placebo. Both the cinnamon and wheat flour were administered in capsule form. Reporting in the journal Diabetes Care, researchers found that all cinnamon-takers experienced a drop in blood levels of glucose, fats and cholesterol by up to 30 percent. No change was seen in the people taking placebo capsules. [View Article](#)

Cod Liver Oil Reduces Diabetes Risk

16 December – Reuters reported taking cod liver oil early in life appears to reduce the chances that children will develop insulin-dependent ("type 1") [diabetes](#), researchers report. The protection may possibly come from the anti-inflammatory effects of long-chain n-3 fatty acids found in cod liver oil. A research team found that the use of cod liver oil in the first year of life reduced the risk of diabetes by 26 percent. No such effect was found with the use of other vitamin D supplements life or with maternal intake of cod liver oil or other vitamin D supplements during pregnancy. [View Article](#)

Health Consequences of Gulf War Persist -Studies

11 December – Reuters reported more than a decade after the end of the Gulf War, veterans of the conflict still suffer more health problems than their military colleagues, researchers said. In two studies comparing Gulf War veterans with other military personnel, scientists found that although those who served in the war did not have a higher rate of new illnesses or cancers, their health was not as good as those who did not go. "There is a health effect of serving in the Gulf War," Matthew Hotopf, of Guy's, King's and St Thomas's School of Medicine in London, said in an interview. Veterans of the war reported significant health problems when he and his colleagues surveyed them in 1997 and the illnesses had persisted when they were questioned again in 2001. "Gulf war veterans remain a group with many symptoms of ill health," Hotopf added. Veterans of the conflict in Kuwait have complained of symptoms such as respiratory and digestive problems, nerve damage, fatigue, pain, numbness and memory and psychological problems. [View Article](#)

Peacekeeping Duties May Harm Soldiers' Health

12 December – Reuters reported peacekeeping duties in trouble spots around the globe may be damaging soldiers' mental health, British researchers said. Long periods of boredom interspersed with moments of extreme anxiety -- rather than the constant tension of war -- are taking their toll, they found. Their conclusions were based on a study of 200 soldiers in an infantry battalion that served in Northern

Ireland between 1993 and 1994. After a six-month tour of duty in the troubled province, soldiers reported higher levels of psychological and physical problems and increased symptoms of anxiety and feelings of social isolation. "Soldiers, following peacekeeping tours, are three times as likely to show psychological problems," Dr Jane Ogden, psychologist at Guy's, King's and St Thomas's School of Medicine in London, said in an interview. In the study, Ogden and Geoff Lawrenson, of Colchester Garrison in southern England, said there were 32 new cases of psychological problems after the deployment. Soldiers reported having trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, anxiety and of feeling lonely and socially isolated. [View Article](#)

Scientists Discover Connection between Obesity and Diabetes

15 December – Science Blog reported scientists have made a revolutionary discovery that for the first time establishes a biochemical connection between obesity and Type 2 [diabetes](#). In this landmark study, tests in mice found that diabetes in obese mice requires a hormone known as MSH, which is made by the POMC gene that is found in both mice and humans. The study found that obese mice without the MSH hormone were obese but did not develop diabetes. Administration of the MSH hormone to these mice increased resistance to insulin and directly affected blood sugar levels. Therefore, MSH may be a factor in the development of Type 2 Diabetes. [View Article](#)

Urine Test May Find Early Kidney Cancer

15 December – Health Day News reported researchers are reporting what could be the first test for early detection of [kidney cancer](#), a potential lifesaver for tens of thousands of patients. Researchers at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia say a urine test has found genetic patterns that signal the disease in patients with early stages of the disease. The test looks for signs of methylation, a process that inactivates genes that work to suppress cancer. Methylated genes were found in all of 50 urine samples from patients with early-stage kidney tumors, most of them cancerous, the report says. No such altered genes were found in urine samples from healthy individuals or patients with other kidney diseases. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Reptile-Associated Salmonellosis --- Selected States, 1998--2002

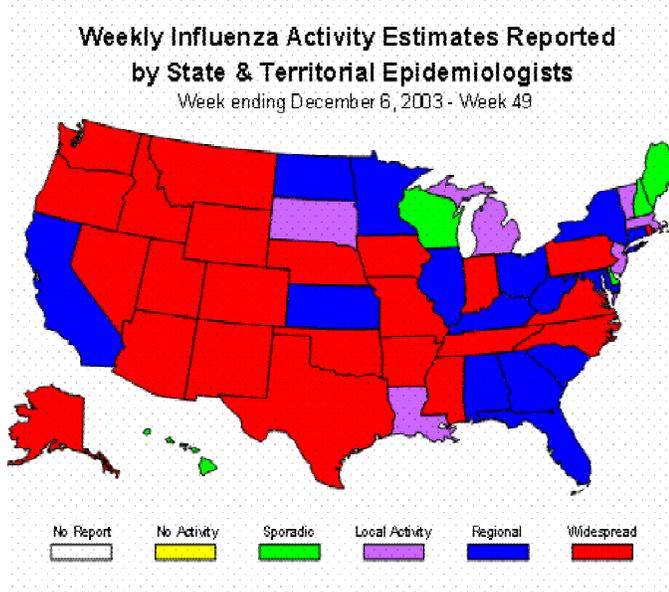
12 December –During 1998--2002, CDC received reports from state health departments regarding *Salmonella* infections in persons who had contact with reptiles (e.g., lizards, snakes, and turtles). *Salmonella* infections usually cause gastroenteritis but can result in invasive illness (e.g., septicemia and meningitis), especially in infants and immunocompromised persons. For decades, reptiles have been known as a source for salmonellosis; however, numerous reptile owners remain unaware that reptile contact places them and other household members, including children, at greater risk for salmonellosis. Increasing evidence suggests that amphibians (e.g., frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders) also can pose risks for salmonellosis in humans. The CDC-MMWR has published a report that describes cases of reptile-associated salmonellosis in six states, offers recommendations on preventing transmission of *Salmonella* from reptiles and amphibians to humans, and provides an update on state regulations mandating education at pet stores about salmonellosis. [View Report](#)

[Influenza Update](#)

WHO Report of Influenza Activity

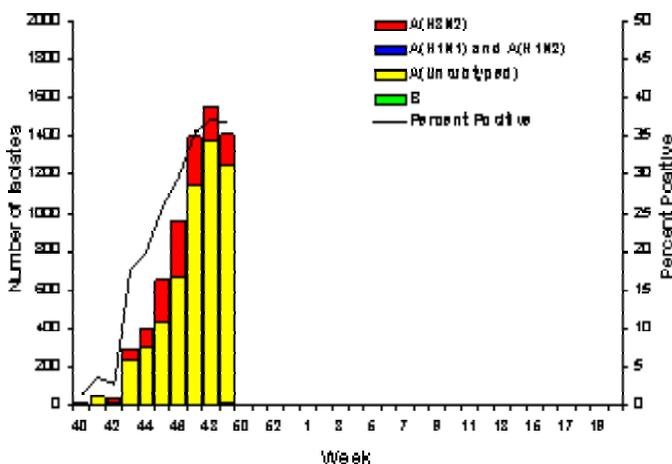
17 December - Influenza activity associated with influenza A(H3N2) viruses continues to rise substantially in some countries in Europe (Finland, France, Norway, Russian Federation and Switzerland) and North America (the USA), but has declined in Portugal and Spain and in some parts of Canada. In the United Kingdom (UK), the early increase in influenza activity appears to have stabilized, although the trend remains unclear. An increasing trend has also been observed in a number of other European countries (Denmark, Italy and Ukraine) where influenza activity currently remains low. Most influenza outbreaks so far this season have been attributed to influenza A(H3N2) viruses. Of viruses antigenically characterized so far, most have been A/Fujian/411/2002-like and the rest A/Panama/2007/99-like. So far, there have been very few reports of influenza A/Fujian/411/2002-like virus being detected in Asia. [View Report](#)

CDC Report of Influenza Activity in U.S.



[View Source](#)

WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04



Additional Reports

16 December – ProMed reported South Korea said on Mon 15 Dec 2003 it had confirmed a case of a highly contagious type of bird flu [A(H5N1)], which can be deadly to humans, at a chicken farm at Umsung, 40 miles to the south east of Seoul. Since early December 2003 about 21,000 chickens have died at the farm. As a precaution, the official said, authorities had now destroyed all the remaining 5000 chickens there. [View Report](#)

12 December – The CDC has published an MMWR report on this year's influenza season. [View Report](#)

16 December – Reuters reported The U.S. Health and Human Services Department said it had contracted to buy 375,000 doses of influenza vaccine from Chiron Corp. and had negotiated a good price for 3 million doses of a second vaccine, FluMist, for any states that want to buy it. The Chiron vaccine was made in Britain but is fully licensed for use in the United States, an HHS spokesman said. Last week Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the government was seeking to buy 500,000 doses of the vaccine from the company. There have been some shortages

of influenza vaccine with the onset of an unusually early and possibly severe influenza season in the United States. The 375,000 doses will be delivered in January. FluMist will be immediately available for states to buy. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

"Bug in Cakes" Poisons 300 Children

16 December – ProMed reported nearly 300 preschool children in a Belgrade suburb in Serbia have fallen sick after eating [salmonella](#)-contaminated food at their nursery schools. The Belgrade Health Care Institute said 53 children have been admitted to hospital since Fri 12 Dec 2003 out of 279 who showed symptoms of salmonella poisoning. Also sick were 28 nursery school employees, the institute said. None was in a life-threatening condition. Several day care centers in the Belgrade area of Zemun were hit by the sickness. The food in all the centers was prepared in a central kitchen, and the children were probably infected after eating cream cakes made of fresh eggs that contained salmonella, doctors at the institute said. [View Report](#)

Kazakhstan: Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome

10 December – ProMed reported 8 residents in districts of Western Kazakhstan Province bordering on Russia have been hospitalized over the last 2 months having been diagnosed as suffering from [hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome \(HFRS\)](#). These cases have occurred in the border districts of the Russian Federation [beyond the disease's natural range]. There has been an increase in the rodent population in the region this year, this being the main factor responsible for local people being infected. Officials said comprehensive epidemiological measures were being taken, including elimination of rodents, the carriers of the disease. Earlier in 2003, the Russian Federation media reported a sharp increase in the incidence of HFRS in Bashkortostan, a region not far from Western Kazakhstan Province. According to the report, citing the Bashkortostan epidemiological inspection center, the number of cases had reached 1000, which was 26 times the figure in 1998. Some sources also noted that 60 percent of cases overall of the disease in Russia had occurred in Bashkortostan. The situation is also a source of concern in neighboring Orenburg Province, which borders on Western Kazakhstan, where local emergency situations officials reportedly said that the incidence of the disease in 2003 was double what it normally is, caused by the seasonal activities of the rodents that transmit it. [View Report](#)

Legionellosis Progresses in Pas-de-Calais

10 December – ProMed reported the area of Lens, in Pas-de-Calais [in the north of France], has been the location for an outbreak of [Legionellosis](#). On the whole, 12 people living in a radius of less than 10 km around Lens were infected since the end of Nov 2003. 2 people succumbed to this infection, whose source is not yet known. The last case to date was reported by the departmental direction of medical and social businesses (DDASS) on 4 Dec 2003. DDASS is undertaking systematic research in the communes concerned, not only in the patients' residences. The regional direction of industry, research, and the environment (DRIRE) is also investigating all public establishments and areas designated for environmental protection. [View Report](#)

South Africa: Horse Racing Influenza Outbreak

11 December – The Star reported horse racing at Kenilworth was cancelled as the multibillion industry scrambles to contain a catastrophic outbreak of [equine influenza](#). The country's premier horse racing and fashion events, including the J&B Met, are also under threat. The Milnerton race track and Port Elizabeth's Arlington have been quarantined. The next 48 hours are crucial as officials monitor the extent of the outbreak. Western Cape director of veterinary services Gideon Brugckner said the incubation period of the virus was five days and it took horses that long before they showed symptoms. The highly contagious disease is similar to human flu, with infected horses suffering high temperatures, nasal discharges and coughing. They are also susceptible to secondary infections. [View Article](#)

Polio Outbreak in Nigeria Raises Red Flag

01 December – Infectious Disease News reported a [polio](#) outbreak spreading from Nigeria to neighboring countries has put 15 million children at risk and is hampering eradication efforts, according to WHO. In response to the outbreak, thousands of volunteers and health workers in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Togo sought to vaccinate every child in the affected areas in just three days. The Nigeria outbreak is only one threat to the goal of a polio-free world. Globally, the Polio Eradication Initiative faces a funding gap of \$210 million for activities through 2005. "Nigeria is now the country with the greatest number of polio cases in the world," David Heymann, MD, executive director of Communicable Diseases at WHO said in a release. "Polio continues to spread within Nigeria to areas which were free and also to neighboring countries. Polio and other infectious diseases know no national boundaries. We face a public health threat, and our goal of a polio-free world is in jeopardy." [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

About 150 Troops in Iraq Contract Sand Fly Disease

10 December – ProMed reported the Army's 101st Airborne Division has sent 20 soldiers to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington for treatment for a skin disease transmitted by bites from sand flies in Iraq, the military said. Another 10 to 20 soldiers from the 101st Airborne, based in Mosul in northern Iraq, are under observation for the illness, called [leishmaniasis](#). Officials said the U.S. military took measures against the sand flies before deploying soldiers in Iraq, issuing insect repellent to soldiers and impregnating their uniforms and insect netting with permethrin, an insecticide. Leishmaniasis is more common in rural than urban areas, but it is found on the outskirts of some cities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. Risk of transmission is highest between dusk and dawn. Vaccines and drugs for preventing infections are not currently available. About 150 U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq have been diagnosed with leishmaniasis, and more may have been infected with the disease. The disease can take months to incubate. [View Report](#)

Tajik Migrant Workers Bring Back Money, Gifts and Often AIDS from Russia

14 December – Yahoo News reported with the approach of the holiday season, Tajiks working in Russia are returning home bearing gifts, money and often [sexually transmitted diseases](#), including [AIDS](#). The problem has reached such proportions that an education campaign warning of the danger has been running on television in this impoverished former Soviet republic in Central Asia. One spot features a father returning home from Russia with toys for the children and a certificate attesting that he is HIV-

negative for the wife. Each night television runs ads for condoms. The campaign is a measure of how big of a problem the issue has become -- Tajikistan is a predominantly Muslim country where the topic of sexuality is broached in public only rarely and then, with care. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Army Facing Medical Crisis

13 December – The Boston Globe reported the planned rotation of roughly a quarter-million soldiers into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan next year is threatening to overwhelm the Army's medical system, according to military and political leaders. Top Pentagon brass and congressional leaders fear that between the needs of Reserve soldiers unable to deploy because of previous medical problems, the health issues of returning soldiers, and a record number of troops in transit, the problems experienced this fall at Fort Stewart could resurface nationally. The Georgia military base, suddenly faced with handling the medical needs of thousands of troops returning from Iraq, came under sharp criticism for long delays in care that especially affected reservists, and for shunting ailing reservists into substandard housing to make way for the returning soldiers. [View Article](#)

CDC: Updated Guidelines for Laboratory Diagnosis of SARS-CoV Infection

10 December - This document provides guidance on the clinical evaluation and management of patients who present from the community with fever and/or respiratory illnesses. Recommendations supercede those in the draft Public Health Guidance for Community-Level Preparedness and Response to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ([SARS](#)), which is currently being revised and finalized. Recommendations also supercede other SARS-related web materials on relevant topics that are under review. [View Guidelines](#)

FDA and CBP Announce Their Transitional Compliance Policy on Food Imports under the Bioterrorism Act

11 December - The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) today issued a compliance policy guide that describes their strategy for maintaining an uninterrupted flow of food imports while improving their safety in accordance with the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (Bioterrorism Act). [View Article](#)

Group Puzzled by Rise in West Nile Cases

15 December 2003 – Yahoo News reported researchers are trying to figure out why the number of [West Nile](#) cases in Pennsylvania almost quadrupled this year compared to last year while the number in neighboring New Jersey went up only slightly. There have been 240 human cases of the virus in Pennsylvania in 2003 compared to only 62 in 2002 — and cases are still being reported, authorities said. Stephen Guptill, a senior research scientist studying the virus at the U.S. Geological Survey (news - web sites), said the increase in Pennsylvania was one of the two big questions among West Nile researchers this year. The other, he said, is the large number of cases in Colorado, which led the country with 2,477 cases and 45 deaths. [View Article](#)

States Unprepared for Health Emergencies -Report

11 December – Reuters reported California, Florida, Maryland and Tennessee are the states best prepared for a biochemical terrorist attack or other medical emergency and Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico and Wisconsin are the least prepared, a new report found on Thursday. The study conducted by the Trust for America's Health found that only nine of the 50 states met more than half of 10 preparedness targets drawn up by an advisory panel of past and present public health officials.

[View Article](#)

US Considers Nonprescription 'Morning-After Pill'

16 December – Reuters reported making a "morning after" pill available without a prescription would provide more timely access to the emergency contraceptive, U.S. Food and Drug Administration staff said in a preliminary analysis released on Monday. A U.S. panel of scientific advisers will meet to debate whether to recommend that the controversial pill be sold without a doctor's prescription for women to use shortly after intercourse to prevent pregnancy. Women's Capital Corp. has asked regulators for permission to sell its emergency contraceptive called Plan B over the counter. Supporters say women need easy access to the pills after unprotected sex or when a condom breaks. Emergency contraceptives can prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours after having sex. Opponents worry women will rely on Plan B instead of regular contraception, and some view use of the emergency pills as equivalent to an abortion. The FDA advisers will hear presentations from agency staff, the manufacturer, as well as comments from the public, before making a recommendation on the possible switch to nonprescription status. A review by FDA staffers, posted on the Internet on Monday, found Plan B had an acceptable margin of safety and posed no clear danger to a fetus if a woman was already pregnant. [View Article](#) [View FDA Briefing](#)

Whooping Cough at Wisconsin Preschool

12 December — ABC News reported parents are on alert after a child and a teacher at a preschool came down with [whooping cough](#). Health officials estimate that 42 other children at the Star of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran School were exposed to the disease. [View Article](#)

Wyoming: Bovine Brucellosis

16 December – ProMed reported a herd of cattle in western Wyoming is infected with a bacterial disease that hasn't been seen in domestic livestock since April 2002, authorities said Friday. The herd of 400 cows in the Upper Green River Basin will be slaughtered because several animals tested positive for [brucellosis](#), which causes cows to abort their calves. The last case was reported in eastern Idaho. The ailment has been nearly eliminated from the nation's livestock, although it survives in wild elk and bison in the Yellowstone region, where cattle also graze. Though rare in humans, brucellosis is a potentially debilitating and chronic disease that can be transmitted by drinking unpasteurized milk or handling infected cows. Governor Dave Freudenthal said Colorado has banned imports of cattle from the Upper Green River Basin. Neighboring cattle herds have been tested and officials are awaiting results to determine the extent of the infection. [View Report](#)

U.S. Health Agency Announces Grant to Fight Infectious Diseases, Bioterrorism on Mexico Border

12 December — ABC News reported with a flu epidemic spreading throughout the United States, the U.S. Health and Human Services Department on Friday announced a \$5.4 million grant to fight infectious diseases and bioterrorism along the U.S.-Mexico border. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary

Tommy Thompson was expected to formally announce the funds following a closed-door session of the binational health commission, also attended by Mexican Health Secretary Julio Frenk. The money will be aimed at improving methods of identifying both infectious diseases and potential bioterrorism threats, the department said in a news release distributed outside the meeting. It also will fund bioterrorism surveillance systems in Mexico that are compatible with those in the four U.S. border states, the department said. It did not elaborate. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Dengue Fever Update for PACOM Countries

10 December – ProMed reported on [Dengue Fever](#) outbreaks in Australia, India, and Sri Lanka. As of 9 Dec 2003 there were 12 confirmed locally acquired cases of dengue fever in the Cranbrook and Heatley areas of Townsville, Australia. The first was reported in early November 2003. Tropical Public Health Unit director of environmental services John Piispanen warned there might be further cases of dengue fever out there, as some sufferers may have such mild symptoms they are unaware of their condition. The Tropical Public Health Unit has inspected 116 homes in the Cranbrook and Heatley areas and sprayed 91 of those homes; 18 were found to be breeding the dengue fever-carrying mosquito *Aedes aegypti*. In India, Kerala witnessed the highest number of dengue deaths at 67, followed by Delhi and Maharashtra at 34 each this year. In Sri Lanka, the highest number of dengue cases is reported from the Western province, Colombo district being the worst hit. A Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) spokesman told the Daily News there is a slight increase in the number of reported dengue cases, with most cases reported from Kirillapone, Pamankada, Kirula, Narahenpita, Borella, and Dematagoda. [View Report](#)

Food Poisoning Affects 200 Workers in Vietnam

10 December – ProMed reported health officials in southern Vietnam say 200 workers at a Taiwanese-owned garment factory have suffered food poisoning. Employees of the Hoa Sen Textile and Garment Company in Tay Ninh Province began to take ill on Sun, 7 Dec 2003 after eating a dinner ordered from a local restaurant. A doctor says the workers complained of dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea, and convulsions. While most have been treated in hospital and sent home, 40 have been admitted for further treatment. [View Report](#)

Hong Kong Department of Health Confirms Imported Cholera Case

10 December – ProMed reported Hong Kong's Department of Health reminded the public to be on guard against [cholera](#) and food-borne infection Wed, 10 Dec 2003, following the confirmation of an imported cholera case. A 24-year-old woman developed diarrhea in Thailand on 6 Dec 2003. She sought medical treatment twice at Tuen Mun Hospital on 7 and 8 Dec, and was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on the following day. She is now in stable condition. As she joined a tour to Thailand during the incubation period, the case is classified as imported. The Department of Health's investigation indicated that her family members and 14 other people in the same travel group were screened by the department and were found to be asymptomatic. Her residence in Tuen Mun was disinfected by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). So far, a total of 7 cholera cases have been reported in Hong Kong. Of the cases, 6 were local and 1 was imported. [View Report](#)

S. Korea Sees Breakthrough in Mad Cow-Resistant Calves

12 December – Yahoo News reported a group of South Korean scientists have cloned cows they believe are resistant to the deadly [mad cow disease](#) and will test the animals in Japan for five years, the leader of the research team said. Professor Hwang Woo-suk at Seoul National University, who led the team, told Reuters the group had duplicated with cows an experiment conducted in creating genetically altered mice with resistance to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, or mad cow disease, is thought to spread when cattle are fed meat-and-bone meal containing brains, spines and other materials from cattle that contain an infectious version of a protein called a variant prion. Hwang said a South Korean-led group of 130 researchers at teams in his country, Japan and the United States had cloned four calves with high levels of prions, making them resistant to BSE. [View Article](#)

Taiwan Medical Researcher Tests Positive for SARS

17 December – Reuters reported a medical researcher in Taiwan has tested positive for [SARS](#), the first case in Greater China since the flu-like virus killed hundreds of people and battered the region's economies this year. Officials said the man possibly contracted SARS about two weeks ago in a laboratory in the Taipei military hospital where he worked. He showed the first symptoms after he returned home from a seminar in Singapore. Authorities in Singapore, the Southeast Asian city state that registered the world's only other new case in September, ordered 70 people into quarantine although no news case had been found there. Officials in China also said they had detected no new SARS infections although the Ministry of Health said the Taiwan case "sounds alarm bells." The World Health Organization said the incident appeared to be an isolated case. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Brazil: Dengue Fever Update

10 December – ProMed reported the Secretariat of Health Surveillance of the Ministry of Health reported, up to week 44 (1 Nov 2003), 299,330 cases of [Dengue Fever](#). Between January and August 2003, the number was 292,599, which was a reduction of 62 percent over the same period last year [2002], but 9 states have only provisional numbers. The Northeast is the region with most cases (151,513), followed by the Southeast with 78,576. There is current circulation of dengue serotypes 1, 2, and 3 in 22 federal units of the country. 616 cases of DHF were confirmed in 19 states, representing 22.6 percent of all DHF cases in 2002. States with the largest numbers of DHF cases are: Ceara, Amazonas, and Espirito Santo with 277, 52, and 47 cases each. During the same period there have been 42 deaths, for a DHF case fatality index of 6.8 percent. [View Report](#)

Colombia: Outbreak of Undiagnosed Severe Respiratory Disease

14 December – ProMed reported from 25 Sep to 28 Nov 2003, 38 cases of a severe acute respiratory disease have been reported to the Colombian National Institute of Health (INS). The illness develops in a range of 10 to 7 days. The disease begins with high respiratory symptoms and fever, cough (with or without expectoration), dyspnea, headache, asthenia, and/or adynamia. Diarrhea, vomiting or intense thoracic pain can also be present. Chest x-rays show interstitial and alveolar infiltrates. This illness has resulted in 13 deaths. Information coming from health care providers of National Institutions indicates an increase of cases with respiratory infection. The disease is affecting patients ranging from 6 months to 72 years old, with an average age of 22 years old. Women represent 58 percent (22) of the cases. The most

affected areas are: Antioquia, 19 cases (50 percent); North of Santander, 14 (37 percent) and Bogota, 7 (13 percent). 4 patients had other chronic diseases like chronic lung disease, hypercoagulability syndrome, and bronchial hyper-reactivity. In 16 of the 38 cases, the following respiratory viruses have been isolated: 2 with Influenza A virus, 2 with parainfluenza virus and 2 co-infections (one with [respiratory syncytial virus](#) and parainfluenza 1 virus, and another with respiratory syncytial virus and influenza A virus). [View Report](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

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